(e) Health is a State subject under the Constitution and the setting up of hospitals are under the control of the State Govt.

(f) to (h). This Ministry has no proposal.

[*English*]

Travel Concession to Senior Citizens

4285. SHRI C.P. MUDALAGIRIYAPPA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have received representations from organisations of senior citizens to seek further travel concessions:

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action being taken in regard thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MALLIKARJUN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b)The demand is for grant of rail travel concession to the senior citizens of the age of 58 years and above in all classes without any distance restriction.

(c) Due to resource constrains and increase in input costs, it is not found feasible to accede to the request for further concession for senior citizens.

Reservation Quota from Punalur and Kottarakkara Stations

4286. SHRI KODIKKUNIL SURESH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to increase the reservation quota from Punalur and Kottarakkara Stations in Kerala for Kerala Express, Jayanti Janata and Rajkot Express; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MALLIKARJUN): (a) and (b). A quota of 2 Second class berths each by train No. 2625 Trivandrum-New Delhi Kerala Express, 1082 Cape-Bombay V.T. Jayanthi Express and No. 2604 Trivandrum-Rajkot Express Ex. Quilon is already available at Punalur and Kottarakkara stations. Due to limited availability of reserved accommodation and full utilisation of quotas at the existing quota holding stations, it is not feasible to provide additional quotas at these stations for the present.

[*Translation*]

Tunnel between Ratanpur and Jamalpur

4287. SHRI BRAHMANAND MANDAL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) when the work on railway line passing through the tunnel between Ratanpur and Jamalpur stations was undertaken and when it was completed;

(b) the time limit of that tunnel determined by engineers; and

(c) whether it is safe to pass trains through this tunnel and if not, the steps being taken to make it safe?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MALLIKARJUN): (a) The line alongwith the tunnel was started in 1856 and completed in 1861.

(b) Condition of the tunnel is satisfactory. No particular life span has therefore been specified.

(c) yes, Sir.

[*English*]

Bogies in Local Trains

4288. SHRI HARADHAN ROY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether most of the local trains are running with dilapidated bogies;

(b) whether the civic amenities of light, fan and drinking water in these bogies are inadequate;

(c) if so, whether there is any proposal to replace these bogies;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MALLIKARJUN): (a) Railway is constrained to run some of the overaged coaches on local trains as it is not feasible to replace all overaged coaches due to constraint of funds and manufacturing capacity. Indian Railways have perforce to continue in Service coaches which are old and sometimes even overaged. However, it is ensured that they meet all safety requirements.

(b) Indian Railways take every possible care to provide, as far as possible, the amenities as recommended by the passenger Amenities committee. However, sometimes it becomes difficult to make good the fittings etc. stolen by the anti-social elements. The drinking water arrangements are not made in local trains involving short journeys with frequent stoppages. Passengers can avail of the drinking water facilities provided at the stations.

(c) to (e). The replacement of old coaches with new ones is a continuous process and old coaches will be replaced as and when new coaches are available.

Trade on Snake Skins Items

4289. SHRI ARJUN CHARAN SETHI: Will the MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether snake skins and items made of snake skins are allowed to be traded within the country;

(b) if so, whether any special licence is required thereof; and

(c) if so, the details of the procedure followed in this regard and the number of the parties to whom such licences have been issued during the last two year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI RANGARAJAN KUMARAMANGALAM): (a) and (b). Under section 49 B of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 snake skins and articles made out of skins of snakes included in Schedule I and part II of Schedule II are not allowed to be traded within the country.

(c) does not arise.

[*Translation*]

Afforestations of Railway Land

4290. SHRI BHAGWAN SHANKAR RAWAT: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of saplings planted so far under the afforestation scheme of railway land;

(b) the arrangements made for the maintenance of the said plants and the headwise expenditure incurred thereon each year;

(c) the annual income of the Railway from the said trees;

(d) the number and names of the fruit trees planted;

(e) whether the Government propose to plant trees on large scale on the vacant railway land from the point of view of environment;

(f) if so, the tentative details thereof; and

(g) if not, the reasons therefor?